

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
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E.O. 11652: N/A
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SUBJECT: GON MOVES AGAINST DEMONSTRATORS

REF: MANAGUA 1724

SUMMARY: THE GON HAS TAKEN TWO STEPS AGAINST STUDENT PROTESTERS WHO HAVE OCCUPIED NUMEROUS SCHOOLS IN CITIES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. ON APRIL 14, THE GON ANNOUNCED THAT GOVERNMENT SECONDARY SCHOOLS WHICH WERE OCCUPIED WOULD BE INDEFINITELY CLOSED UNTIL THE SITUATION WAS NORMALIZED. ON APRIL 15, STUDENT PROTESTERS WERE EVICTED BY A POLICE JUDGE BACKED UP BY MILITARY FORCE FROM THE NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL SCHOOL AND, REPORTEDLY, SOME OTHER SCHOOLS. END SUMMARY

1. THE PHENOMENON OF STUDENTS OCCUPYING SCHOOLS AND CHURCHES IN POLITICAL PROTEST AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT BECAME GENERALIZED IN CITIES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY DURING THE WEEK OF APRIL 10. THE DEMONSTRATORS, WHO HAVE BEEN WEARING HOODS TO MASK THEIR IDENTITY, GENERALLY HAVE BEEN FEW IN NUMBER. HOWEVER, THEIR ACTIVITIES OF PUTTING UP ANTI-SOMOZA AND PRO-FSLN BANNERS AND CHANTING SLOGANS HAVE RE-

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CEIVED WIDESPREAD PUBLICITY. MOST OF THE OCCUPIED SCHOOLS HAVE BEEN SECONDARY SCHOOLS BUT THIS FORM OF PROTEST ALSO INCLUDED THE NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL SCHOOL.

2. THE GON DID NOT ACT TO STOP THESE PROTEST DEMONSTRATIONS UNTIL APRIL 14 WHEN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION ANNOUNCED AN INDEFINITE SUSPENSION OF THE OCCUPIED SCHOOLS. THE PURPOSE OF THIS ANNOUNCE-

MENT WAS TO TERMINATE ANY BASIS FOR THE PROTESTERS TO CONTINUE TO BE IN THE SCHOOLS.

3. ON APRIL 15, A POLICE JUDGE BEARING AN EVICTION ORDER ENTERED THE AGRICULTURAL SCHOOL, WHICH HAD EARLIER BEEN DECLARED CLOSED, AND INFORMED THE PROTESTERS THEY HAD TO LEAVE. HE WAS BACKED UP BY MILITARY FORCES. THE STUDENTS APPARENTLY LEFT PEACEFULLY. OTHER REPORTS INDICATE AT LEAST ONE SIMILAR CASE OF EVICTION OF STUDENTS.

4. PRESIDENT SOMOZA REFERRED TO THE ISSUE IN A SPEECH ON APRIL 15. HE SAID THE GON HAD ACTED WITH PATIENCE, BUT HE WAS NOW CALLING ON THE PARENTS OF THE STUDENTS TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR OBTAINING THEIR RETURN TO THEIR HOMES.

5. WITH THE GROWING STUDENT PROTEST MOVEMENT, THERE HAVE BEEN INCIDENTS OF PARENTS DETAINED WHEN THEY BROUGHT FOOD TO THE SCHOOLS. THERE

HAVE ALSO BEEN FURTHER DEMONSTRATIONS RELATED TO THE OCCUPATION OF SCHOOLS AND CHURCHES WHICH HAVE BEEN BROKEN UP BY MILITARY USING TEAR GAS AND FIRING INTO THE AIR. WHEN DEMONSTRATORS APPROACHED A HOUSE OF A SOMOZA SUPPORTER IN LA CONCEPCION, MASAYA, ON APRIL 15, DEMONSTRATORS WERE SHOT AT FROM THE HOUSE, EITHER PROVOKING OR RESPONDING TO ROCKS AND MOLOTOVE COCKTAILS THROWN AT THE HOUSE. THE HOUSE WAS BURNED, AND TWELVE PERSONS REPORTEDLY WERE WOUNDED AND ONE KILLED BEFORE THE GN ARRIVED AND DISPERSED THE CROWD. IN THIS INCIDENT, AS VIRTUALLY EVERY SIMILAR RECENT VIOLENCE IN NICARAGUA, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THERE ARE AT LEAST TWO VERSIONS OF WHAT OCCURED.

6. ON ONE OF THE STUDENT DEMANDS, I.E., END OF SOLIARY CONFINEMENT FOR TWO FSLN PRISONERS, THERE HAS BEEN SOME MOVEMENT BY THE GON. ARCHBISHOP OBANDO Y BRAVO HAS ANNOUNCED THAT HE HAS DISCUSSED THAT ISSUE AND THE QUESTION OF AN AMNESTY FOR FSLN PRISONERS WITH PRESIDENT SOMOZA. OBANDO SAID THE PRESIDENT AGREED TO CONSIDER THESE ISSUES. ON APRIL 14, MINGOV MORA MET WITH RELATIVES OF PRISONERS AND SAID THE GON WOULD STUDY THEIR PETITION FOR IMPROVED CONDITIONS OF CONFINEMENT AND REPLY WITHIN A WEEK.

7. COMMENT: IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT ANTI-SOMOZA ACTIVISTS ARE TRYING TO MAINTAIN CONTINUOUS AND INCREASING OPPOSITION PRESSURE. AT THE SAME TIME THE REGIME IS GRAPPLING WITH THE PROBLEM OF WHERE TO DRAW THE LINE. IT IS AWARE OF US CONCERN, AND TO DATE THE LINE APPEARS TO BE THAT THE GN IS UNDER ORDERS TO RESPOND ONLY TO THREATS TO LIFE AND PROPERTY. HOWEVER, EVEN THOUGH MANY PEACEFUL PROTEST DEMONSTRATIONS HAVE BEEN ALLOWED TO RUN THEIR COURSE, THE GN IN SOME CASES, SUCH AS THE TWO KILLED AT THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY AND ON SEVERAL OTHER OCCASIONS, HAS ACCIDENTALLY OR INTENTIONALLY CAUSED DEATH TO CIVILIANS. AT THE SAME TIME, IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THE GN ALSO HAS SUFFERED SOME CASUALTIES FROM BULLETS, BOMBS, AND

ROCKS DURING THESE CIVIL DISTURBANCES.

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